



July 18, 2021
8th Sunday after Pentecost
8:30 & 11:00 am

“You are my friends!” What a blessing! What a gift! Jesus claims us as friends, in the fullest sense of the word. In doing so he, reveals the true depth of “agape,” self-giving love. To love with the whole self. He goes so far as to express the last full measure of that love: to give one’s life – literally and purposefully – for the sake of another. Today we explore that depth of that love, as it is expressed in the life of Jesus, and as we see it lived in the lives of the “martyros.”



**8th Sunday after Pentecost
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CALL TO WORSHIP

“The Love Round”

**Love, Love, Love, Love
Christians, this is your call
Love your neighbor as yourself
For God loves us all**

WELCOME

LITANY

FROM THE BEGINNING, the invitation of faith is to love God with the whole of our being.

The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Let us love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. *(Deuteronomy 6:5)*

The invitation of God's Christ is to love God by loving others,
to love our neighbors and God's world as we would be loved ourselves. *(Matthew 22:39)*

One who does not love does not know God, for God is love. *(1 John 4:8)*

If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. *(1 Corinthians 13:2)*

Teach us a language of love,

Let us live in love. For whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. Amen *(1 John 4:16)*

GATHERING SONG

“Dearest Jesus, at Your Word” #520

- 1 Dearest Jesus, at your word
we have come again to hear you;
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
and in glowing faith be near you
as the promises here given
draw us wholly up to heaven.

- 3 Radiance of God's glory bright,
Light of light from God proceeding,
Jesus, send your blessed light;
help our hearing, speaking, heeding,
that our prayers and songs may please you,
as with grateful hearts we praise you.

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

God of all, in Christ you befriend us as your own. And you call us to reach to others with that same love and friendship. Inspire us to love in that self-giving way we see revealed in Jesus. **Amen.**

REVELATION 6:9-11

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given;

¹⁰ they cried out with a loud voice, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?"

¹¹ They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.

And the Word was with God. **And the Word was God.**

PSALM 31 *Read responsively*

¹¹ I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

**¹² I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.**

¹³ For I hear the whispering of many — terror all around! — as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God."

¹⁵ My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

¹⁷ Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord, for I call on you;

ACTS 6:8-15

⁸ Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. ¹³ They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." ¹⁵ And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the Word was with God. **And the Word was God.**

Please stand as you are able for the Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil” #512

Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

The Holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

JOHN 15:12-17

¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

And the Word was with God. **And the Word was God.**

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

SONG OF THE DAY

“Where Charity and Love Prevail” #359

- 1 Where charity and love prevail,
there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love,
by love we thus are bound.
- 2 With grateful joy and holy fear,
God's charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and soul
now love God in return.
- 3 Let us recall that in our midst
dwells Christ, God's holy Son;
as members of each body joined,
in him we are made one.
- 4 Let strife among us be unknown;
let all contentions cease.
Be God's the glory that we seek;
be his our only peace.
- 5 Let us forgive each other's faults
as we our own confess,
that we may love each other well
in Christian gentleness.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Lord, you have blessed us in abundance with such love and goodness. We marvel at the beauty of your creation, at the world and our place in it. We thank you for sustenance and shelter, for the love of faith community and family, even as we reach out in love to those in need, the suffering and the stranger.

O come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into God's presence with songs of praise and offerings of thanksgiving to the Lord of life and God of all.

We offer these gifts to you with thankful hearts and joyful praise. Receive our offerings as signs of our whole lives lived to your glory and devoted in service to you.

Gracious God, receive our gifts as signs of your Kingdom come on earth. With them we commit ourselves to your rule and reign, in our lives and in all the world. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING AND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.



All are welcome to celebrate communion at Abiding Love. Hold out your hands to receive the bread. Take a cup of wine or grape juice from the tray. Children and adults not communing are welcome to receive a blessing. Please follow the direction of the ushers.

COMMUNION SONG

“All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly”

#461

- 1 All who hunger gather gladly;
holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wand'ring.
Here in truth we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

- 2 All who hunger, never strangers;
seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here in joy we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

- 3 All who hunger, sing together,
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here in peace we have been fed.
Blest are those who from this table
live their days in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

“God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind” #400

- 1 God of tempest, God of whirlwind,
as on Pentecost descend!
Drive us out from sheltered comfort;
past these walls your people send!
Sweep us into costly service,
there with Christ to bear the cross,
there with Christ to bear the cross!**

- 2 God of blazing, God of burning,
all that blocks your purpose, purge!
Through your church, Christ's living Body,
let your flaming Spirit surge!
Where deceit conceals injustice,
kindle us to speak your truth,
kindle us to speak your truth!**

- 3 God of earthquake, God of thunder,
shake us loose from lethargy!
Break the chains of sin asunder,
for earth's healing set us free!
Crumble walls that still divide us;
make us one in Christ our Lord,
make us one in Christ our Lord!**

- 4 God of passion, God unsleeping,
stir in us love's restlessness!
Where the people cry in anguish,
may we share your heart's distress.
Rouse us from content with evil;
claim us for your kingdom's work,
claim us for your kingdom's work!**

PROCLAIMING OUR MISSION AND SHARING GOD'S PEACE

We go forth together, **sharing God's love!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Update for Children's and Youth Ministry Leadership

As we continue to seek leadership for Children's and Youth Ministry, we have determined that broadening our search criteria will help to engage the right person to enhance programming in this critical area. Pastor Brad and the Search Team sought the advice of the Bishop and Southwest Texas synod staff, our Church Council, and Abiding Love Past Presidents. We would like to make the congregation aware of the advice and direction we have received from the various individuals and groups.

- The Search Team for a Director of Children's and Youth Ministry should continue its work to source lay professional candidates for the position.
- The Team will also consider Deacons (Ministers of Word and Service) with appropriate qualifications and vocational focus as a good way to expand the candidate pool. A Deacon would be Called to this position by the congregation.
- The committee of Past Presidents, the Council, Pastor Brad, and the Search Team are open to considering a pastoral Call (Pastor of Word and Sacrament) with a focus in youth and children's or youth and family ministry. Pastor Brad will facilitate a conversation with Bishop Sue Briner to address this option and process.
- These efforts can be conducted simultaneously in the interest of discovering the best option for leadership in this critical ministry area and long-term leadership of Abiding Love.
- We will review financial aspects of these options--compensation plans, Synod guidelines and the congregational budget--to ensure the wherewithal to proceed in any of these directions.

This effort is continuing with all due haste. It is our desire to re-establish children's and youth programming in this emerging post-pandemic time. The Search Team will continue to work diligently to find the best solution for Abiding Love's needs. Please contact Pastor Brad, (bhigham@abidinglove.org) or Sue Milam, smilamaustin@aol.com, if you have any questions or concerns. And please pray for wisdom and guidance for all those involved in the search.

In peace,
Sue Milam, Abiding Love President

WORSHIP IN THE SEASON OF PENTECOST



Loving God

July 25: Unmediated Love

Setting and Safety Measures for Indoor Worship

Following CDC Guidelines, face coverings are optional for people who have been fully vaccinated. Please continue to wear a face covering if you are not fully vaccinated. Communion servers will wear face coverings, and we will continue to maintain social distance and encourage the use of hand sanitizer.

SERVING SUNDAY, JULY 18, 2021

Preaching and Presiding Minister: Rev. Brad Highum

Altar Guild: (8:30) Amelia Mettke, Tricia Slovacek

(11:00) Denise Alaimo, Karen Gonzales

Assisting Minister: (8:30) Reggie Kikta

(11:00) Joyce Flachmeier

Communion Assistants: (8:30) Lindsay Krabbenhoff

(11:00) Jeri Lyn Sump

Lector: (8:30) Lindsay Krabbenhoff

(11:00) Jeri Lyn Sump

Music Leaders: Luciano Laurentiu, Karron Lewis, Gus Sterneman

Sound: (8:30) George Glaser (11:00) Philip Drake

Ushers: (8:30) Karin & Lloyd Matthys

(11:00) Kurt Armstrong, Steve Essinger, TJ Shoaf

Video Streaming: Philip Drake



Abiding Love Summer Celebration TODAY! Noon, Activity Center

Celebrate "forty-plus" years of mission and ministry at Abiding Love!
Lunch will be provided by the Fellowship Ministry.
WELCA will be offering the 40th Anniversary crosses for sale at the
Sunday celebration. \$10.00 - cash or check will be accepted.

ABIDING LOVE CALENDAR

SUNDAY, JULY 18

8:30 & 11:00 am Worship with Communion (Sanctuary)
9:45 am Bible Boosters (Classroom)
12:00 pm Summer Celebration (Activity Center)

MONDAY, JULY 19

11:00 am ALLC Food Pantry
6:00 pm Bread For All Food Pantry
6:45 pm Junia Café Group
7:00 pm Sarah Circle
7:00 pm AA (Music Room)

TUESDAY, JULY 20

6:30 pm Constitution Review (Library)
7:00 pm Al-Anon (Music Room)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

7:15 am Women Alive (Z)
10:00 am Hannah Circle (Classroom)
10:00 am Staff Meeting (Library)
6:30 pm ACTS Core Leadership (Library)

THURSDAY, JULY 22

10:00 am ALLC Quilters (Upstairs Commons)
6:30 pm Stress Coping (MS Room)

FRIDAY, JULY 23

SATURDAY, JULY 24

1:00 pm DC McCauley Memorial Service

SUNDAY, JULY 25

8:30 & 11:00 am Worship with Communion (Sanctuary)
9:45 am Bible Boosters (Classroom)